



PORTALS

Volume XIII

Fall 1984

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

NORTH CENTRAL

PORTALS

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY
NORTH CENTRAL
STUDENT WRITING**

Sponsored by
the Students of
Purdue University North Central
Westville, Indiana

Prize money awarded by the Goliards

Volume 13 Fall 1984

FOREWORD

We are able to include all the winners in both the Freshman and Open Writing Contests in this thirteenth edition of *PORTALS*. All winning entries in the Freshman Contest were written originally as assignments by students enrolled in Freshman English courses at PNC this year; those winning entries in the Open Contest were submitted by members of the PNC student body at large.

As has been the case frequently in the past, and as the table of contents will reveal, some winners earned more than one award since authorship is secret until after the winners are selected by the judges. This year, in fact, only seven different writers dominated all the prizes; and cash prizes, funded from the Annual Book Sale, were awarded to each of 13 winners—first prize in each contest is \$25, second prize \$20, third prize \$15, and \$10 to each of the honorable mentions.

We indeed thank all those entrants whose entries have made *Portals* a success once again, and we congratulate those entrants whose works appear in this issue. The winners represent, as usual, a cross-section of PNC students.

In the past two or three years there has been a dwindling of the number of entrants, caused possibly by the consistent appearance of multiple winners in each year . . . as if campus writing activities were dominated by a few. Quality is the only dominating element, and so we encourage and welcome one and all to submit entries. At the very least, it could be an interesting and satisfying experience; what is more, your efforts might be rewarded with a prize.

DIRECTOR AND EDITOR, STUDENT WRITING CONTEST:

Professor Hal Phillips

FACULTY JUDGES:

Professor Barbara Lootens
Professor John Pappas
Professor Hal Phillips
Professor Roger Schlobin
Professor John Stanfield

STUDENT JUDGES:

Tammy Byvoets
Diane Knoll
Margie Olson
Kathy Quinlan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FRESHMAN CONTEST—1984

First Prize Winner

Rebecca Cohen Fistel	"If"	1
-------------------------	------	---

Second Prize Winners

Denise Hoff	"Resurgent Moon"	2
-------------	------------------	---

Third Prize Winner

Denise Hoff	"Opposing Forces"	8
-------------	-------------------	---

Honorable Mention

Bill McCullough	"Touch Times Four"	10
Mary Wenzel	"The Dispossessed"	11
Paul Dickie	"Hurry Up and Wait"	12
Mary Wenzel	"A Nun May Be Somebody's Sister"	14

OPEN CONTEST—1984

First Prize Winner

Susan Lichtman	"Huck, Tom, and Twain"	16
----------------	------------------------	----

Second Prize Winner

Gale Carmona	"Water and its Symbolism in American Literature"	17
--------------	---	----

Third Prize Winner

Bill McCullough	"Annie and Me"	19
-----------------	----------------	----

Honorable Mention

Gale Carmona	"Adam's Curse"	20
Gale Carmona	"The Windhover"	21
Bill McCullough	"Pain For a Daughter"	23
Bill McCullough	"Love Lost"	24

IF

Rebecca Cohen Fistel lived in Long Island, New York, before coming to Michigan City with her husband and children two years ago. She is majoring in Liberal Studies and hopes to pursue a career in social work.

If he walked into my life today, I'd kiss him. The last time I kissed him, his body was as cold as stone, but his spirit warmed the unfamiliar room. My anger, pain, frustration, sadness, and loneliness momentarily disappeared as I gazed at the tranquil, painfree look on his serene face.

If he walked into my life today, I'd tell him he always made me laugh. As huge virgin white snowflakes fell from the sky, he was lowered into the ground. His nephew asked if he could throw snowballs into the open grave not yet covered with dirt. Everyone laughed because that's exactly what his "Uncle" would have done if he had been standing with us.

If he walked into my life today, I'd tell him how proud I was of him. He tried valiantly to walk across the stage during his graduation from the University of Buffalo. His determination was stronger than the physical and mental anguish he was experiencing. He managed the university radio station and implemented innovative ideas for the staff. He left a bit of himself with each person he touched.

If he walked into my life today, I'd tell him that the happiness and love he lavished on his nephew left its mark. His nephew fondly remembers when he let him drive his car, with strict instructions never to tell anyone about what he did. He would be proud of his nephew. He is held up as a role model and fondly referred to as "Uncle."

If he walked into my life today, I'd tell him he was a spoiled brat. Whatever he wanted he got because he was terminally ill. I never had the nerve to tell him that I resented his being showered with gifts because he was sick. He knew he was manipulative and took full advantage of this power. I never had the nerve to tell him, but now I would.

If he walked into my life today, I'd tell him I'm a thief. I took a quarter out of the suit jacket he was to be buried in. I felt guilty for stealing. When he was a little boy, I reported him to a store manager for stealing bird seed. He never forgave me for embarrassing him, but he did learn a valuable lesson. Sixteen years later I am the thief. Today I wear that quarter in a pendant around my neck. Whenever I fondle that quarter I can feel his hand cupped in mine.

If he walked into my life today, I'd tell him I wish I knew more about him. The ten year age difference was, at times, like one hundred. While his body was in remission, he was a swinging single and I was a married lady. I didn't understand his lifestyle, but he understood and envied mine. He knew he would never experience the love between a husband and his wife. He did experience the love between a man and a woman. His name would never be carried on by an heir.

If he walked into my life today, I'd tell him how much I miss him. I miss his telling me that the only meal I know how to prepare was hamburgers. I miss his teasing. I miss his joking. I miss him!

If he walked into my life today, I'd tell him I knew he was dying. I told him he was going to survive. I wished it, but I didn't believe it. I was not honest with him and I'm sorry for it. I thought by my telling him that he was responding to chemotherapy, he would believe me and fight for life. He was smarter than I. He saw through me because his body told him the truth. Now I see the error of my ways. I never gave him the chance to tell me how he felt about dying. Was there anything he wanted to say to me? Why didn't I say to him what I wanted? Instead, he shut me out. This may have been his way of saying goodbye.

If he walked into my life today, I'd tell him I'm sorry I never told him. If he walked into my life today, I'd kiss him.

RESURGENT MOON

Denise Hoff registered at PNC after a 10-year absence from schooling and is now a fourth semester English major.

Goddess worship remains the oldest religion known to humankind. Although it is found throughout the world, this paper will deal primarily with Eurasian development. Artifacts have been found dating back 35,000 B.C.E. in the Paleolithic era, with definite female features such as breasts and vulvas. By the Neolithic era (8000-3000 B.C.E.), female figures dominated art with goddess statues and female figures in the three stages of life. The beginning of the Pre-classical era (2900-1000 B.C.E.) brought mother religions to their peak.¹ At about the same time, northern invaders were sweeping down through these established cultures, conquering them and setting up patriarchal rule. Slowly over the centuries matriarchy was lost. What hadn't been destroyed or buried was distorted. Female goddesses became gods, female legends became male legends, female art became male art, female skills became male skills, female leaders were replaced with male leaders, pagan (matriarchal) rituals became Judeo-Christian (patriarchal) rituals.

All the efforts were not strong enough. The healing, the rituals, the memories lived on, and became known as the Old Religion, developing into the Craft. Keepers of the Old Religion were called the "Faeries",² a word synonymous with "Witch".³ The efforts of the Christian Church to eliminate Witches have been well-documented throughout history, often citing the Bible as justification, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus 22:18). But they did, and the recent resurgence within American feminist circles grows ever stronger with each passing day. The spirituality found in Goddess religions offers American feminists a personal and a political power base without the misogyny of patriarchal concepts.

Spirituality is the housekeeping of the soul: a tool for expanded understanding of life. Webster defines spirituality as a religious or moral aspect of the spirit or soul, being refined in thought and feeling.⁴ The word's base is spirit from spirare—to breathe, and the Latin spiritus—breath.⁵ Practitioners of patriarchal religions are not the sole possessors of spirituality since its definition does not limit it to a particular religion. The word retains validity when used by pagans.

Defining the Goddess religion entirely would take more space than available here, but some basics are in order. Although the female figures prominently in Goddess religions, the male is not excluded. In a modern Witch's words:

The symbolism of the Goddess is not a parallel structure to the symbolism of God the Father. The Goddess does not rule the world; She is the world. Manifest in each of us, She can be known internally by every individual, in all Her magnificent diversity. She does not legitimize the rule of either sex by the other and lends no authority to rulers of temporal hierarchies. In Witchcraft, each of us must reveal our own truth. Deity is seen in our own forms, whether female or male, because the Goddess has her male aspect.⁶

The purpose of religion answers the questions of life, solves the paradoxes, and helps us understand ourselves and others. In Goddess religions, the basic differences of both sexes are acknowledged; however, each sex must include the masculine and feminine in order to be whole. The forces of feminine and masculine are different and yet not "in essence: they are the same force flowing in opposite, but not opposed, directions."⁷ 'Neither is 'active' or 'passive', dark or light, dry or moist;"⁸ both sexes contain those qualities. Starhawk continues:

The Female is seen as the life-giving force, the power of manifestation, of energy flowing into the world to become form. The Male is seen as the death force, in a positive, not a negative sense; the force of limitation that is the necessary balance to unbridled creation, the force of dissolution, of return to formlessness. Each principle contains the other: Life breeds death, feeds on death; death sustains life, makes possible evolution and new creation. They are part of a cycle, each dependent on the other.

Existence is sustained by the on-off pulse, the alternating current of the two forces in perfect balance. Unchecked, the life force is cancer; unbridled, the death force is war and genocide. Together they hold each other in the harmony that sustains life, in the perfect orbit that can be seen in the changing cycle of seasons, in the ecological balance of the natural world, and in the progression of human life from birth through fulfillment to decline and death—and then to rebirth.⁹

Goddess religions are in tune with nature: everything has its time and its place, each cycle of life revered. Life, a precious gift, gives birth to celebration. Followers concern themselves with wisdom, healing, and elimination of suffering and injustice. Peace loving and supportive, the religion rejects the ludicrous myths that have surrounded the Craft for centuries. There are few rules or laws in the Craft; each must govern oneself. One exception is “Do what thou wilt, but do no harm.” As far as casting spells, Witches believe whatever energy they send out will return three-fold: strong incentive against evil-doing.

“Feminist” is another term needing definition. The word has become a real hot potato in today’s vocabulary. There are those who insist they are not feminists, even though they are. There are those who insist they are, but aren’t even close. Then there those who say they are humanists, not feminists. Add to those the people who are feminists precisely because they are humanists. For the purposes of this paper, “feminist” will be defined as those people who do not accept the tenet of women’s “natural inferiority”, who believe women are the equal to men, and who hold women in as high a regard as men.

The definitions of “personal” and “political” mean exactly that. “Personal” embraces anything that affects personally; “political” anything that affects governmentally. Since each affect the other, the personal is political.

One last definition is necessary. Patriarchal concepts, being male defined, do not include the complete viewpoints, if any at all, of women, children or environmental philosophies. Women are thought of as “less than” men, their creation from “a rib of Adam” as an afterthought.¹⁰ Their totality rarely validated, they have few role models to pattern themselves after (the temptress Eve, the perpetually youthful Virgin, or the harlot Mary Magdalene). The rules and laws governing women under patriarchy have been excessive, narrow, and strict; misogyny rampant. Children, like women, legally are “property” with few rights and many harsh rules (spare the rod, spoil the child). The patriarchal view that man (used literally) has dominion over earthly things allows an attitude that encourages the rape of land and resources, the pollution destroying air, water, and soil, and the extinction of animals, all upsetting the balance of nature.¹¹ Little wonder that feminists welcome the Goddess religion like a breath of fresh air.

The resurgence of the Goddess religions is not without opposition, from outside of feminist circles as well as from the inside. Obvious opposition outside of feminism would be from those viewing anything other than Christianity as bad and/or evil. Newscasts and newspapers outline every evening the intolerance of the present power structure toward liberal or feminist viewpoints.

From within the feminist community there are two main arguments of opposition. The first are those arguing, although not quite this bluntly, that there isn't any time for such nonsense; they have far too little time for the many issues of more importance. Issues such as the Equal Rights Amendment, freedom of choice on reproduction, sexuality, and occupations, shelters from abuse, and economic equality are all vital and need more time than available. During the long struggles, spirituality has been given low priority. Spirituality, however, is a soother of the soul. During arduous campaigns, spirituality allows peaceful moments that nourish, providing a refreshing break from the tedium of activism. Religion is also a source of great strength; and as feminists feel strengthened, they are stronger.

Evangelical feminists present the other argument. Although mourning the fact "that the Judeo-Christian tradition had been so patriarchal that it forced may justice-oriented women in neopaganism,"¹² evangelical feminists give the Goddess¹³ "little serious consideration."¹⁴ In the little consideration they do give, they question if Goddess religions aren't just reverse sexism.¹⁵ As pointed out by Starhawk earlier, this is not the case.

Evangelical feminists feel the problems rests not in the religion, but in the male language used. So "when the Bible is read contextually, a theme of male-female equality undeniable emerges."¹⁶ Therefore, they argue, change the male inclusive language to sex neutral language and that will solve the problem. However, the specific "theme of male-female" passages are few and far between, requiring a lot of reading between the lines. Furthermore, this argument ignores feminist's main complaint: patriarchy and its destructiveness toward women.

In 1980, the National Council of Churches took the argument over language seriously enough to "establish a Task Force on Sexism in the Bible."¹⁷ The result is *An Inclusive Language Lectionary: Readings for Year A*. Proponents are pleased; opponents think it is "tasteless, if not heretical."¹⁸ Most of the changes are mild (humankind instead of man), but as *Newsweek* points out,

Occasionally the new lectionary sounds like Scripture as translated by the Coneheads: the Genesis verse in which God decides to create a "helper" for the first man now reads, "Then God the SOVEREIGN ONE said, 'It is not good that the human being should be alone; I will make a companion corresponding to the creature.'"¹⁹

If past performances after a new translation is any indication, the backlash from this one promises to be stunning.

The benefits of the Old Religion for feminists are two-fold: personal and political. The personal being anything that affects people on a daily basis over a lifetime, from the mental to the emotional to the physical. As America's government is supposedly of the people, by the people, for the people, changes affecting the "people" ultimately will weave their way into governing. Considering the position America presently is in—Gargantuan amounts of military hardware, and our military presence in foreign lands, mediocre education, unjust laws and irresponsible social justice—the Old Religion's priorities—peace, environment, wisdom (intellectual study and education), and social justice—can not be ignored if we desire healthy survival.

Personal benefits for feminists from the Old Religion are many. The joy of discovery, the strong female imagery, the acknowledgement of women's bodies, functions and complexities, the female's equal status as a High Priestess, the bonding with nature and the concept of having authority over oneself, the poetry and art are but a few, and their examination follows.

The sheer joy in discovering a place in time when women and their lives were revered provides a validation not to be taken lightly. From Ntozake Shange's choreopoem, *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* illustrates, "i found god in myself/& i loved her/I loved her fiercely." Those who learn-

ed the game of “being a good girl” (silent, smiling, solicitous) while internally questioning their own sanity have been released. Those “never able to conform” rebels (opinionated, obdurate, obstinate) have found redemption. A “herstory” based on fact, besides being educational and fascinating by its own merit, offers the hope and encouragement of a better life for all: a light at the end of the tunnel.

The strong female imagery excites beholders. It does not lessen the male imagery (especially of the Classical period), but adds new depths and insights to the whole human psyche. Not having to deny your sex to feel at one with a deity, as women have had to do in order to identify with God the Father, liberates the soul. The impact psychologically of women seeing women held in high esteem can not be undervalued. Neither can that same impact on men not offer men the half of themselves they have had to deny, and therefore, be beneficial to both sexes.

The acknowledgement of the whole woman celebrates women’s bodies, their functions, and their complexities. Recognition of women in the three stages of life removes the Madison Avenue idea of beauty and redefines beauty as internal. Recognizing each stage is an important reflection of every day female reality.

Charlene Spretnak states:

The revival of the Goddess has resonated with so many people because She symbolizes the way things really are: All forms of being are One, continually renewed in the cyclic rhythms of birth, maturation, death. that is the meaning of her triple aspect—the waxing, full, and waning moon; the maiden, mother, and wise crone.²⁰

The Maiden “is the virgin patroness of birth and initiation.”²¹ The Mother symbolizes one who is sexual: she gives life and nourishment, not necessarily to a child of her own, but perhaps to others as an educator, or to an idea or book, or to a business. The Crone symbolizes the time of wisdom, of reflection, and of preparing for death and rebirth.

Female body functions are celebrated and sacred. Menses is not dirty but, instead, parallels the natural cycle. Sexuality isn’t evil or sinful, but a precious gift of life-force and loving from Her. Pregnancy and birthing are not diseases or illnesses, but natural, sacred functions. Menopause doesn’t mean “dried-up”, but blossoms with the growth of wisdom.

The complexities of the many Goddesses offer wide ranging capabilities to women. From ancient inscriptions come descriptions of Ishtar, “She is a flood of light whose strength is might.”²² Atargatis was an “Ancient Goddess of the Sea.”²³ Ashtart, “first descended to the earth as a fiery star.”²⁴ Tiamat was “Well remembered as Creator of all,/first owner of the Tablets of Destiny.”²⁵ Asherah, “they knew Her as She Who Builds.”²⁶ Merlin Stone writes:

... in our contemporary quest for role models and positive images, the accounts of women as Goddess, or as culture heroine, that reveal portraits of woman as strong, determined, wise, courageous, powerful, adventurous, and able to surmount difficult obstacles to achieve set goals, may be of even greater interest and value for women of today.²⁷

The tremendous number of Goddesses rediscovered all over the world testify to the once strong matrifocal cultures. There seems to be a Goddess for every concern of life.

Women were revered in the beginnings of civilization because of their ability to birth for two reasons: for the miracle that it is and, second, as the only way for the species to survive. Menses was considered mystical enough, but combined with the parallel to the moon’s cycle it was powerful magic indeed. Dr. Paul Zalarin writes:

Since religion was created and shaped by women it was natural for them to assume the key positions of high priestess ... a two-fold responsibility. She was both a link to the gods and doctor, with the herbal knowledge to heal.²⁸

Having High Priestesses as well as High Priests as religious leaders provides an equalizing quality lacking in patriarchy.

Another aspect of the Old Religion gives followers authority over themselves. The basis of feminism is personal power and choices. Feminists argue that adults should not only have every option available in decision making, but the authority to exercise and implement the decision they reach. The Old Religion's stress on personal responsibility goes hand in hand with feminism.

The focus on nature in the Old Religion provides women another kind of validity. As life givers, and life nourishers, women are tuned into natural balances. They know the requirements for health, and the consequences if those requirements aren't met. Mothers, including women who aren't (because usually they are still closely aligned with women who are mothers), have a large investment at stake. Making sure Susie or Johnnie eat nutritious meals, get plenty of sleep, brush their teeth, wear their jackets, and all the other day-in and day-out care are small deposits toward healthy survival. Parenthood has a way of making us more cognizant and determined to retain a healthy environment to insure the investment will pay off: healthy adult offspring in a world still fit to live in. The second stage of life also brings the menses, and reminds women monthly of nature's cyclical system.

Last but not least of the benefits of the Old Religion delight us: the poetry and the art. Starhawk points out,

Witchcraft has always been a religion of poetry, not theology. The myths, legends, and teachings are recognized as metaphors for 'That-Which-Cannot-Be-Told,' the absolute reality our limited minds can never completely know. The mysteries of the absolute can never be explained —only felt or intuited.²⁹

Lyrical, full of images and colors, the poetry sings. The words hold joy and celebration. The poetry encompasses prayers, stories, and legends with natural phenomenon intertwined throughout. An "Invocation to the Dewy One" starts:

All-dewy Sky-sailing Pregnant Moon
Who shines for all
Who flows through all
Light of the world which is yourself.
Maiden, Mother, Crone
The Weaver The Green One³⁰

Another, the "Kore Chant: Spring & Fall equinox," goes:

Her name cannot be spoken,
Her face was not forgotten
Her power is to open
Her promise can never be broken.

All sleeping seeds She wakens,
The rainbow is Her token,
Now winter's power is taken,
In love, all chains are broken.

All seeds She deeply buries,
She weaves the thread of seasons.
Her secret, darkness carries
She loves beyond all reason.

She charges everything She touches, and
Everything She touches, changes.
Change is, touch is, Touch is, change is.
Change us! Touch us! Touch us! Change us!

Everything lost is found again
In a new form, In a new way.
Everything hurt is healed again,
In a new life, In a new day.³¹

Viewing the art empowers, restoring a deeply felt solidarity with the past. By today's standards beauty would be the last word to describe the Goddess figurines. However, if we set aside today's male definition, we can see a beauty long forgotten. We see mass, depth, and balance in her body. Facial expression is inward-looking; her age irrelevant.³² "She exists, not to cajole or reassure man, but to assert herself."³³

Feminists are finding a unifying bond in the spirituality of the Old Religion void of the woman-hatred that pervades within our culture. Struggling to create a new world where women are celebrated, the resurgence of the Goddesses seems only fitting; and the personal power gained from a spirituality rejoicing in the female offers a richness too great to ignore. Recognizing the personal as political, the Goddesses present feminists and opportunity for a stronger base for successful activism. Virgil said, "We make our destinies by our choice of gods."³⁴ Many feminists agree.

¹ Hallie Iglehart, *Womanspirit: A Guide to Women's Wisdom*(San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1983), p.12.

² Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1979), p.4.

³ Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1983), p. 1076.

⁴ *Webster's New World Dictionary*, Concise ed. (1966).

⁵ Websters.

⁶ Starhawk, p.9

⁷ Starhawk, p.27.

⁸ Starhawk, p.27.

⁹ Starhawk, p.27.

¹⁰ There is a current slogan suggesting "Adam was a rough draft!"

¹¹ James Watt, a born-again Christian, is a prime example in his recent role as Secretary of the Interior.

¹² Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, "An Evangelical Feminist Confronts the Goddess," *The Christian Century*, 20 October, 1982, p. 1043.

¹³ Mollenkott, p. 1045, rejects the term Goddess because she feels God is a "non-sex-specific" job, and using Goddess "implies" She is female, and therefore, God is male—"The language of idolatry." Mollenkott also says the 'ess' "trivializes" a word. I must take exception with this statement. A good case can be made that our language, being male defined, is at times detrimental to women as a whole. For example, there are many words with negative connotations used by men to describe women or parts thereof, from the absurd to the obscene. While at the same time, the reverse is rare. However, the addition of "ess" to a word is a language convenience, and in no way weakens or dilutes the word's power. The same connotation remains, however: the image is female.

¹⁴ Mollenkott, p. 1043.

¹⁵ Mollenkott admits to once believing feminist pagans rejected or ignored men. I admire her honesty. It is an important point. Feminists as a group, as well as feminist pagans, have never and have now no intention of rejecting their husband's, sons, fathers, and brothers; what they do reject is the traditions, institutions, and laws that bind or shackle women.

¹⁶ Mollenkott, p. 1045.

¹⁷ Richard N. Ostling, "O God Our [Mother and] Father," *Time*, October 24, 1983, p. 56.

¹⁸ Ostling, p. 56.

¹⁹ Peter McGrath with David Gates, "Scrubbing the Scriptures," *Newsweek*, 24 October, 1983, p. 112.

²⁰ Starhawk, p. 29

²¹ *The Politics of Women's Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power Within the Feminist Movement*, ed. Charlene Spretnak (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1982), p. xvii.

²² Merlin Stone, *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood: Our Goddess and Heroine Heritage* (New York: New Sibylline Books, 1979), I, p. 106.

²³ Stone, p. 112.

²⁴ Stone, p. 113.

²⁵ Stone, p. 118.

²⁶ Stone, p. 119.

²⁷ Stone, p. 3.

²⁸ Paul Zalasin, *Witchcraft* (New York: Gemini International Press, 1979), p. 10-11.

²⁹ Starhawk, p. 7.

³⁰ Starhawk, p. 86.

³¹ Starhawk, p. 88-89.

³² Larousse World Mythology, ed. Pierre Grimal (New York: Prometheus Press, 1965) contains quite a few pictures of Goddess figurines and statues, especially pp. 18-19, 40 A, 84-89, and 108 A & B.

³³ Adrienne Rich, "Prepatriarchal Female/Goddess Images," *Politics of Women's Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power Within the Feminist Movement*, ed. Charlene Spretnak (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1982), p. 33.

³⁴ Mollenkott, p. 1045.

OPPOSING FORCES

By Denise Hoff

There are basic lessons in life that we must each wrestle with and come to terms with. Some we fight against. They are hard and cruel; and yet, if we allow ourselves a chance to examine and explore our feelings, we find that the answers are also there, inside us. So it is with the speaker of Dylan Thomas's poem, "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, By Fire, Of a Child in London". Strong language, intense imagery, and quiet sounds of the poem are effective tools to examine the reality of death. The speaker, wrenched out of naivete by the violent passing of a young girl, shares the progression of his emotional and natural reactions to his conclusion, from his indignant outrage to his recognizing a basic truth of life.

There are several reasons for the intense imagery. The first is to suggest cycles in nature. The poem begins with images of creation and ends with images of death. Another cycle outlined within the poem are the speaker's emotions: negation to grief to comprehension. The thesis (1.24), at the end rather than the beginning, reinforces the idea that the death is a backwards cycle.

The imagery also serves as contrast. The loud rumbling noise of a "fire" "Burning", "the sea tumbling", "the riding Thames" contrasted with the quiet, whispering "shadow of a sound", "darkness/Tells with silence . . . / . . . the still hour", and "the dark veins of her mother" sensuously gives us the emotional outburst and the calm of comprehension. There is a contrast between "deep" "darkness" and "light breaking", suggesting the depths of the speaker's sorrow giving way to a ray of illumination. Strong, negative language, "refusal", "never", "murder", "blaspheme", is in opposition to the soft positive images of "bird beast and flower", "water bead", and "mother", and parallels a contrast between the harshness and gentleness of life.

Explored in the imagery is an interesting cycle/contrast combination. The speaker starts with all life, proceeds to an assembly ("synagogue"), then to one person ("I"), then reverses from one person ("child") to another assembly ("friends") and expands to include all dead (1.24). Not only is the speaker contrasting life and death, but is suggesting we are not alone in either sphere.

By using worldwide, familiar images, the speaker gives us the most important reason for his choice of images: to include all of us in this drama. None of us is exempt; anyone of any part of the world can relate to the images of "mother" and "fathering", "bird beast and flower", "ear of corn", "valley" and "water", and "innocence and youth". He also includes familiar religious images. Through all history, humans of every civilization, group, tribe or clan have sought to understand the conflicts, realities, and ironies of life. Their need to answer these questions has evolved into complex myths and religions. Starting with creation, to which every religion would have an answer, the speaker includes all humankind with the word "Zion", the theology of God(s). He then chooses words indigenous to several of the oldest religions known to modern, Western humankind: Judaism ("synagogue"), Christianity ("stations of the breath"—cross), and Paganism ("mother"). All of which have many spiritual stories explaining death: to comfort survivors and help them start a process of healing from the wounds of loss, anger, fear, and impotency in the face of death.

The tone of the poem is futile outrage. Strong language such as "refusal" in the title and "never" as the first word of the poem set the tone of ire. Ranting and raving "I shall not murder/ . . . /Nor blaspheme" are impotent gestures of futility. Taking the child's death personally, he is shocked into facing mortality. His emotions churn like "the sea tumbling in harness" to intense depths as he discovers each individual's unimportance compared to the "all humbling darkness".

There is an irony central to the poem. The strong language mentioned above are absolute terms; their force the irony. He "shall" (stronger meaning than will) not mourn; he insists on it, demands it of himself. Like a child screaming "I will not cry" as tears gush from its eyes, our speaker may be insisting he will not mourn; but he is. Negating his grief only serves to emphasize it. His intense mourning is awesome, and is not just for the child's lost life, but for his own loss "of innocence and youth".

In the speaker's own loss of innocence, he too has faced a "grave truth". He has learned of the other side of reality. He can no longer be guileless—there are two forces in life, and if one exists, so must the other for balance: birth/death, light/dark, rage/calm, joy/sorrow. The speaker has also learned those opposing forces are not only necessary but they have value. Birth could not be so sweet if death were not so painful. The light of the sun would not be as eagerly welcomed if the darkness of night hadn't just receded. Joy couldn't be so delightful if pain had no depth. If emotions didn't rage, then calm would not be such a relief. The opposing forces surround us, and next to "all", death is but one small "humbling" part.

By the last stanza, "Deep with the first dead . . .", the speaker's perspective returns with the recognition that the child is with all the "friends" who have gone before her; she is shrouded within the quiet peaceful earth. Her life force, her energy, is not dead; it simply has changed form: the child has gone from a life being nurtured by our "mother" earth to being the nurturer of life itself. The child has become one with the earth. The speaker begins to understand that death is simply change. Having been moved by the same life force that moves "bird beast and flower", the speaker suggests we have all been nourished by those past dead generations who have succeeded us, "the grains beyond age, the dark veins of" earth.

He also begins to acknowledge that death is rebirth with his choice "of the riding Thames" in the next to the last line. The Thames is a river that flows eastward through London and up to the North Sea. The sun rises in the east; a rebirth of the life force we witness daily. The north has a strong magnetic pull that is natural like the gradual pull toward death. There is a hint of suggestion in the last stanza that the world at large is not uncaring or "unmourning"; it simply has accepted the basic truths. and knows life must continue. The speaker has come to the conclusion, as we all will in time, that "After the first death, there is no other", and is comforted.

Churning in emotions of impotent ire, struggling to come to terms with a child's death, the speaker forces himself into insightful growth. The imagery explodes and illuminates like "fire" providing contrast and intense mental pictures of all life. Outrage, futility, ironic negation resolve to a calm recognition "of the riding Thames." The child is symbolic of all the masses, of all the dead, but once all the dead are together, they become elements, a sharing of souls; they become one nourishing "mother" and "there is no other".

TOUCH TIMES FOUR

Bill McCullough was formerly employed for a number of years by Bethlehem Steel, Bill came to PNC in 1982. He is majoring in English and plans a career in teaching after graduation.

"In forty years of close observation, I have only once seen an adult American male publicly greet his father with a kiss. American boys neither kiss nor embrace their fathers after they have grown up." This quote is from Ashley Montagu's book *Touching*.

Thinking of our five senses as response to objective reality, I am struck by the thought that touch is linked to the other four in a way that they individually are not linked to each other. When I observe something, my sight touches that object. It follows then, that when I hear, smell and taste, there is also a touching function going on, reaching out to stimuli and bringing them back to my center.

If I am to make contact with someone, I must go through all or any one of my senses. To see his expressions, my eyes must meet his being. They must touch him. My ears must touch his sounds; my nose must touch his smells; and sometimes my tongue must touch his taste.

When I was growing up our family was not overly demonstrative. The only tactile satisfaction I received was from my grandfather. My father and I rarely touched each other with any of our senses.

Earlier this year, I made my annual return to my boyhood home in Pennsylvania. Upon arrival I received, as expected, a matter-of-fact handshake from my father. Before long, I had settled into my filial routine. My father and I sat and watched sports on television by the hour. Conversation consisted of baseball strategy, or how the

Steelers would do this year. It's not that Dad didn't want to communicate with me on any other level; I think he just never found a way of expression with which he could be comfortable. The next few days droned on as reruns of failed attempts at ease.

On the day before I was to leave, Dad asked me if I wanted to go with him to the drugstore. Even after all these years, the car ride was filled with futile overtures to shatter the silence between us. When we got there we had to wait for the prescription to be filled. To kill time we went off, each in a different direction, scanning magazines and testing different after shaves. After a few minutes, I walked over to where my father was standing. I found him engaged by immutable ceramic statuettes with dopey looking characters holding signs conveying cliché truths.

Without looking up, Dad said, "Here's one you should get for me." The message on the sign read: WORLD'S BEST FATHER.

Before I could reply, he picked up another and said, "And here's one I should get for you ." I looked at the smiling goofy little dwarf whose epistle was simply: I CARE.

Just then the druggist informed us that our prescription was ready. We picked up the medicine, went to the car and drove home in virtual silence, neither one of us commenting on the obvious gesture.

My father did not hug me when I left the next day. He shook my hand. But his handshake had deep personal meaning. Coupled with the visual touch of the day before, this physical touch reinforced the message of I CARE.

THE DISPOSSESSED

Mary Wenzel is a mother of 6 children. She came to PNC three years ago. At present, she is working in the library at the Westville Correctional Center.

I am surrounded all day by lonely, fearful, angry, and alienated men. Some of them are destined to remain this way the rest of their lives. The loneliness, fear, and anger of these men seep into my own pores eventually. As I leave my surroundings at the end of each day, I step into another world; a world of openness and of freedom. I sometimes wonder which world is the real one. A Friday holds the same promise for me as it would for a weary traveler of the desert struggling towards a distant oasis on the horizon. But at least I am able to leave my claustrophobic surroundings; the men within must stay.

I work in a prison, Oh, excuse me, the word *prison* has been stripped from our vocabulary to be replaced with "correctional facility". It is also unenlightened nowadays to use the term warden; a warden is now a "Superintendent", inmate is "resident", and security is "custody". Lest we forget, men are also placed in "correctional facilities" to be "rehabilitated". To my mind, these are purely euphemistic terms having more to do with form than content. I'm sure the exact day these new terms were coined a metamorphosis was to have taken place. The magic wand would wave and that alienated man in his prison cell would become a more noble specimen of humanity. It didn't happen quite that way. In fact, not long after these more virtuous terms were adopted, the bloody Attica prison riots took place.

There has been a monumental amount of rhetoric lately about crime and the problems within prisons. I will not bore you with further rhetoric. Instead, let me tell you about some of the men I come into contact with each day in prison.

It is true that some men feel safer in prison than in civilian life. They are assured of three meals a day, a place to sleep, medical care, etc. I think Steve feels this way. Steve is nineteen. His mother started him on his drug habit at an early age. He doesn't know who his father is, just that there were always many different men in his mother's life. He was often left in strange places among strange people, to fend for himself as best he could. Try explaining to him what the words "family" or "mother" or "father" mean. Steve's past is in his face for all to see.

Vernon is a small, muscular, young black man almost nineteen years of age. He is eager as a puppy to please, and very friendly, but also somewhat assertive if pushed by the other men. Vernon comes from a family of fourteen and is serving a sentence of four years for theft. Vernon was placed in the Segregation Unit for a supposed infraction of the rules. He was later found innocent by the Conduct Adjustment Board, but the future held a special punishment for Vernon, guilty or not. When Vernon was placed in Segregation, the unit was overcrowded and it was necessary to place two men to a cell. During the middle of one night, Vernon woke up to find his cellmate hanging from the top bar of the cell door by torn and knotted bedsheets. Vernon frantically screamed for help, but couldn't seem to arouse an officer. He climbed on the cot below the body and supported its weight with his arms and shoulders until someone could arrive. He stood there holding that dead weight for quite a long time. It was afterwards determined that the boy had died before Vernon woke up and found him. Vernon was moved to the hospital unit and sedated because he could not deal with the nightmares that resulted from this incident. Vernon is back in school now, but he doesn't seem as eager to please or as friendly as he once was.

Tom is also young, eighteen years old, small in stature, but lacks the muscular build of Vernon. His facial features could almost be described as "pretty". His general appearance "was" one of softness and vulnerability. Tom has been sexually assaulted once now. Since the assault, his pretty features have become blurred, and he walks very stiffly, as if to contain his violation within himself. He has been moved to another dorm, but there is nothing to prevent another violation from occurring. He will hopefully learn to deal with his violation, but it is bound to leave scars for years to come.

Prisons have seen a tremendous influx of young men. They are often alienated, lonely and angry long before they arrive here. I think their life's journeys eventually lead them to this place. There are also men here, grown men, who are completely illiterate. There are men and young boys who labor under the handicap of not only illiteracy, but also the handicap of a lower than normal mentality. They are ill equipped to deal with the demands the outside world places upon them and are even less fortunate in prison. They are easy prey for others in the prison setting. It can be said almost with a certainty that they will return to this place again and again. They are the "dispossessed" of our world.

HURRY UP AND WAIT

Paul Dickle returned to PNC in the summer of 1983 after an absence of 13 years. He is majoring in CIS and is the Student Senate President this year.

No consideration of American culture would be complete without making reference to America's favorite pastime. I reject the ridiculous implication that this is baseball and refer, instead, to our love affair with the line.

Were it necessary for me to portray life in America to the rest of the world, I would be forced to reveal our penchant for standing in line. The picture I'd paint would depict an endless row of the backs of peoples' heads, winding and snaking down to a vanishing point somewhere close to infinity. Let's face it! Although we profess a genuine hatred for lines, we really must enjoy them. If everyone who verbalized a dislike for lines really stuck to his guns, would there be any lines? Subconsciously, we must love them because we all end up standing in them.

Anyone can stand, or at least anyone can hold a place, in line. There are no requirements regarding socio-economic background or educational level. Here is one instance of no prejudice. All races, creeds, and religions are permitted, encouraged, and, at times, required to stand in lines. There are lines for everyone that can be broken into three sub-groups: lines you drive in, lines you sit in, and lines you stand in.

Some of us remember the gas lines of 1973 as an example of driving in line. Others better recall it as a vivid instance of sitting in line. Another illustration would be the line at a toll booth. We can all visualize ourselves behind a line of cars while some "scatter-armed" idiot gets out of his car to retrieve a quarter he threw and missed the basket.

Sitting in line, while less sophisticated than driving in line, is substantially above the primal line form: the standing line. Examples of the sitting line include the doctor's office, the unemployment office and ironically, the employment office. Perhaps the best example is the emergency room at the hospital, which is probably the slowest moving of any genus of line.

Finally, there are the standing varieties of line. These are by far the most common type. Some of these would be the grocery store check-out line, the admission paying line at the movies, lines at the amusement park, and standing in those silly lines at a wedding reception. There are also day-long college registration lines which provided the motivation for this tirade. This is by no means meant to be a complete list. With a little bit of practice you too can develop a hatred that becomes equal for all types of lines.

Banks, in an all-out attempt to meet the needs of their customers and utilize space efficiently, use all three of the above methods. They allow their customers the added convenience of drive-through banking, so they may encourage the drive-in line. They make ample provision for sitting in line within most loan departments or while making arrangements for a checking account. Of course, during banking hours, which are designed with the line-lover in mind, you can always stand in a good, old-fashioned line at the teller's window and feel like a rat in a maze. If for some strange reason there is no line, take heart; wait a few minutes and there will be. In addition, the more progressive banks have a service specifically for shut-ins and those who can't make it in person for one reason or another. This can be considered the phone-in line. While you are in the convenience of your own home or office, they put the phone call on hold and assist you when it is your turn. If none of the above methods brings you complete satisfaction, they tell you to go to Helen Waite in the accounting department.

Lest you think I am picking on a particular institution, the U.S. military has a general rule that states, "Never authorize only one line when two or more will do."¹ I have never had the privilege of observing this first hand, but I have heard, often, in great detail, of the precise efficiency with which this system operates. Generally, anyone in the military service can locate a line at any time. Reaching the head of that line, he will be directed to the proper line in which to stand. This is called standing-in-line so you can stand-in-line.

Are we in danger that this great builder of character and patience, the line, will disappear as an American institution, a victim of the computer age? I think not. The fifth law of reliability states, "To err is human, but to really foul things up requires a

computer.”² No matter how technologically efficient we become there will continue to be lines, even if it’s only to iron out the computer’s mistakes. Instead, I propose a corollary: “The more efficient the process, the longer the line.”³

I eagerly anticipate the future of the American line. I feel certain we are about to enter a new era of “linear” technology aimed at unnerving even the most patient persons. As this day approaches a good thing to bear in mind is this: “The other line always moves faster.”⁴ This is one of Murphy’s Laws. Armed with this tidbit of information we should, theoretically, end up in the correct line. We simply choose one line, and then we stand in the other one.

Eventually, there will be one central computer large enough to handle every bit of information and each minute daily function for each and every one of us. It will monitor everything. What an exciting thought. All of us will at long last have something in common. We’ll all end up waiting in the same line, and we’ll all be told in the same automated, nasal voice “please step aside”.

Notes

¹ Uncle Sam, *Basic Procedures and Rules of Military Conduct, Section 8* (Washington, D.C.: Bantamweight Books, 1958).

² “5th Law of Reliability,” Bulletin Board outside L-S-F Office #69. July, 1983.

³ Paul Franklin, *Linear Trivia and Other Tripe* (Rolling Prairie: Mighty Bad Books, 1983).

⁴ Murphy, *Murphy’s Law* (Millbrae, CA: Celestial Arts, 1979).

A NUN MAY BE SOMEBODY’S SISTER

By Mary Wenzel

A Catholic upbringing; nothing can quite compare to the experience; Children are a most impressionable group of little beings and an exposure to a Catholic education and all it entailed in my day were quite enough to unhinge any young mind.

Before I give the reader the impression that I am bitter about that education, let me say that I also experienced some of the most pleasurable moments of my young existence in the bosom of “Mother Church”.

It was hammered into our little Catholic skulls that we were members of an elite group, a secret club even, the “Ya, Ya, I’m a Catholic and you’re not” sort of thing. I distinctly remember baptizing the neighbor children on their back porch one summer afternoon, much to their mother’s displeasure. They were already baptized Lutherans, thank you.

From an early age I also learned there were “good nuns” and “nuns to avoid”. Nuns, as the indoctrination went, were “Handmaidens of the Lord” and “Brides of Christ”. My grandfather even had me believing nuns were angels descended from heaven in human form. I think I might also have been a little more gullible than most fledgling Catholic children. When I became old enough to take an interest in my appearance, I even attributed the unsightly dimples on my knees to all the kneeling required during the course of that education. I’ve finally come to terms with the fact that I was just born with unsightly dimpled knees.

Nuns were not to be challenged or ignored. A nun, mortal sin of mortal sins, was never to be disobeyed. I cannot remember even the most ferocious, sinful Catholic boy not ultimately bending to a nun’s authority. That authority came from the highest possible source, after all. I do remember a few nuns displaying most ungodly means of dealing with an occasional miscreant. It didn’t happen often. We were kept in line exceedingly well by equal elements of awe and terror.

I was an excruciatingly shy young girl during this time and was even more intimidated than most by these women who figured so prominently in our training. I had avoided thus far any painful confrontations and hoped to maintain the "status quo".

It was with some shock and no small amount of dread that I received the news my mother had for me one day close to the end of school break for summer vacation. I would be taking piano lessons that summer on Saturday mornings from Sister Veronica in exchange for dish washing chores in the nun's kitchen. The nun's living quarters were on the floor above our classrooms and had long figured in our active little imaginations as a place of great mystery. I was to report for my first lesson that Saturday morning. Sister Veronica was one nun we students were not exposed to that frequently. She, unlike the other nuns, concerned herself solely with teaching piano.

Saturday dawned, and unlike my mood, it was a perfect, bright, spanking blue and white of a day. I set off on my bicycle for my appointment with Sister Veronica. I was feeling extremely reluctant, but a kernel of an idea was forming in the back of my mind. I would have access to that mysterious upper sanctum during the course of paying for these dreaded lessons. I would also have the means at my disposal of exploiting the smallest tidbit of information I might gather from my visits. Who knows, my lofty imaginings hinted, I might even become the most popular student in class. This assignment had definite prospects.

I arrived, only slightly disheveled: I had gotten my overall-clad leg entangled with the bicycle chain twice on my journey. I rolled up the offending pant leg to hide the grease stains and sidled into the room for my lesson. Sister Veronica was with another pupil. I had an opportunity to take stock of my adversary at my leisure.

At first I was disappointed. Sister Veronica looked exactly like the rest of the nuns. It's true, I thought, that you see one nun, you've seen them all. During the course of my observations, however, I began to detect a difference. She would glance at me from time to time and smile. She also had an economy of movement about her. Those movements were few, but always slow and graceful. Her voice when she spoke to offer a word of advice or encouragement to her pupil was soft and melodious.

I began to feel more at ease. Before I realized it, it was my turn and I was seated at the piano bench near her. She put me at ease immediately and asked me a few questions about myself. Only very few. She seemed to know why I was there and did not make a point of referring to how the lessons would be paid for. I loved her for that.

Sister Veronica and I spent the next two years on Saturday mornings together. I never once argued about going or resented losing valuable play time. She gradually and gently nurtured my appreciation and love of good music. She never imposed her taste on mine or became dogmatic in her approach. I was her acolyte at the altar of music. Due to her influence I even harbored for a brief period a hope of becoming a nun.

I never did take advantage of my position among the sisters by sharing any scandalous gossip with the other students. There simply was nothing scandalous to share. Their household was a quiet, well-run one. I was treated with a friendly concern at all times. I began to see the sisters not as just "nuns", but as people sharing a way of life together.

I'm still washing dishes, in my own household, of course. Occasionally I entertain myself at the piano. Whenever I do, I have a vivid picture in my mind of a celestial Sister Veronica. Naturally, she's conversing in a knowledgeable way with her beloved Beethoven, Brahms, and Bach, and wincing in a most ladylike fashion whenever I hit a wrong note.

HUCK, TOM AND TWAIN

Susan Lichtman is originally from Chicago where she attended the School of the Art Institute. Susan was a commercial artist for 15 years. She is presently living in Michigan City and pursuing a degree in English literature at PNC.

The words “mark twain” belonged to the leadsman on a Mississippi steamboat. They constituted a cry of warning that the steamboat was approaching a depth of two fathoms (twelve feet)—the depth at which the steamboat was heading either into or out of trouble. The assumption of this particular name by Samuel Clemens is an indication of the deep division within America’s most illustrious author. Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn represent Twain’s two conflicting states of mind: the state which craves social approval and acceptance, and the state of mind that requires total freedom in which to create as an artist. In his work, *Life on the Mississippi*, Twain wrote:

“A pilot in those days was the only unfettered and entirely independent being that lived on earth . . . writers of all kinds are manacled servants to the public . . . In truth, every man and woman and child has a master . . . but in the day I write of, the Mississippi pilot had none.”

Twain often lamented that his dream to be a river pilot never came true. The position of pilot would have reconciled Twain’s need for approval and the need for freedom; pilots were expected to be the nonconformists of society, and yet they were highly respected for their skills. In many ways, this conflict is an American one represented in the two works of Twain: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn are representative of Twain’s schismed nature. While Tom is always enchanted with life, Huck is mostly lonesome, listening to the owls “who-whoing about somebody that was dead.” Tom’s environment is that of a “white town drowsing in the sunshine of a summer’s morning,” while Huck’s town is first seen in the dark from a hilltop with “three or four lights twinkling where there were sick folks, maybe.” Tom’s adventures are juvenile and innocent; Huck’s adventures center around running away with a slave, murder, accidental death, and cruelty. Tom belonged; Huck was a social outcast with questionable parentage. Tom’s story is a celebration of boyhood—“mostly true” in Huck’s works. *Tom Sawyer* is told in the third person; Huck Finn speaks in his own untamed vernacular. The introduction to *Huckleberry Finn*, however, provides a clue to the connection between the two books: “That book [*Tom Sawyer*] was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things that he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody but lied, one time or another . . .” “Mostly true”: the reference leads the reader to believe that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* will be the whole truth. In fact, *Huck Finn*, is all about the truth—the beauty and the eternal shortage of it. That is why it depicts lying more than does any other piece of fiction.

The collision of Huck’s moral dilemma with his society is precisely the collision of the two selves of Mark Twain. Twain once wrote in reference to *Huck Finn*, it was “a book of mine where a sound heart and a deformed conscience come into collision and conscience suffers defeat.” In Huck’s moment of truth, he asserts he is no longer victim to the “deformed conscience” of society, but a purposeful enemy of the established order: “All right then, I’ll go to hell . . .” Huck becomes the alienated man who has been immortalized since in the works of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Camus.

Almost immediately following Huck's resolve, the novel's final chapters dissolve into the nonsense of boys' adventures, with Tom Sawyer making a reappearance. This disintegration demonstrates Twain's inability, and his society's inability, to confront the problem of moral dissent. Twain has no mooring for Huck once Huck decides to abandon society's mores: "... a body that don't get started right ... when the pinch comes there ain't nothing to back him up". (p. 119) Twain has no escape left for Huck, except the territories out West. Perhaps the uncivilized frontier was settled by hundreds of Huckleberry Finns who also had no place left for them in society.

Mark Twain was a pioneer in realism. He was also the consummate dissenter. He was a witness to American society's loss of innocence—beginning with the Civil War and culminating under the shadow of the Industrial Revolution. He watched as America put away her slingshots for rifles, her farmland for cemeteries, her soft riverbanks for polluted causeways. It is always sad to see childhood disappear; it is even sadder to watch it purposefully destroyed. Tom Sawyer may show the way into trouble, but Huck Finn shows a way out of it. Perhaps Tom and Huck are Twain's attempt to save the parts of himself that had no expression in his lifetime. Perhaps they are parts of America that should be given voice today as well.

WATER AND ITS SYMBOLISM IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Gale Carmona is a mother of three children. She came to Valparaiso from Venezuela two years ago, soon after her husband passed away. She has been at PNC since August of 1982 and is an English major.

Water imagery has always been predominant in the literature and myths of mankind. For Western man, the Bible has provided the first examples of this: Noah and the Ark, which tells of the almost total destruction of humanity through the rising of the seas, and Moses' escape from Egypt and the annihilation of Pharaoh's army by the rising Red Sea waters.

The Psalms speak of the "river of God, of the man who is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in good season." John the Baptist's baptism of Christ with the water of the Jordan River is the most vivid example of water imagery in the New Testament. There appears to be a pattern in these and other Biblical images: the seas, which are salt-water, bring destruction and death, while the rivers, fresh-water, bring renewal of spirit and life. American writers, heirs of this earlier civilization, often use these images in their works, continuing the traditional differentiation between salt and fresh water, between water as a source of life and water, or the lack of it, as death.

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Samuel Clemens gives us the river as a symbol of freedom, while the land is symbolic of man and his corruption. Huck escapes from the confinements of society and the cruelty and ignorance of his father by floating down the Mississippi River in the company of Jim, a slave who uses the river as a means of escape from his servitude. The fugitives are safe while they remain on the river: whenever they land or come in contact with other people, they are physically or spiritually endangered, as in Huck's encounter with the Grangerfords. At the end of Chapter 18, Huck says, "I never felt easy till the raft was ... out in the middle of the Mississippi ... we was free and safe once more. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft."

In Kate Chopin's novel, *The Awakening*, the sea is an escape for Edna, but not as the river is for Huck. Huck escapes on the river to peace, growth, and greater self-knowledge: in essence, the river brings him to the fullness of life. Edna's escape is from life to death: the sea seems to be waiting for her more faithfully and patiently than her husband or her lover, and finally claims her. The sea is seen as having a voice that is "Seductive, never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in abysses of solitude . . . The touch of the sea is sensuous, enfolding the body in its soft, close embrace" (p. 557). The waves are compared to serpents: in the story of the creation of man, the serpent tempted Eve and caused the fall of mankind from grace. In *The Awakening*, the ocean and the serpent are one, symbolizing the seductive powers of death, to which Edna finally succumbs.

In the "Open Boat", Stephen Crane paints a picture of four men adrift on the ocean after a shipwreck. They are tantalizingly near the shore, but each time they draw nearer, the seemingly malevolent force of the sea flings them back. The water is seen as "grim", having "snarling crests." The men are depicted as helpless against the forces of nature, which they interpret as consciously evil. Here the land is seen as a haven, and other men as possible rescuers, as comrades-in-arms in their battle with the forces of nature. When, in desperation, they make a final attempt to reach the shore, a man comes running to help them, with a "halo about his head", shining "like a saint." Their battle with the sea is won, but the sea takes her revenge: the strongest and bravest of the four is drowned as he reached the shore. At the end, "the white waves paced to and fro in the moonlight, waiting for their next victim. Salt water: death and tears.

In "The Hollow Men", T.S. Eliot introduces a variation on this traditional theme. No longer is it a matter of salt or fresh water: now it is the dryness and sterility of modern man, the *lack* of life-giving water. Men are "hollow", men are "stuffed", their heads are filled with "straw". "Dried voices", "dry grass", "dry cellar" give men "shape without form . . . paralyzed force, gesture without motion." These images run throughout the poem: "cactus land", "stone images". He refers to life as "this hollow valley, this broken jaw of our lost kingdoms," an obvious reference to Ezekiel's vision of the valley filled with dry bones, representing God's people when they attempt to live without him. Eliot's dry, hollow men are dead in all practical senses: lack of water equals death in life.

Robert Frost presents yet another poetic view of water as the source of life. In "A Brook in the City", he discusses the urbanization of a rural area and the disappearance of the grass, the apple trees, and the brook that once flowed through the countryside. He sees the brook as an "immortal force" which cannot be dried up. It can be diverted underground, made to flow through sewers; its trajectory may be changed, but it continues to flow. The brook appears to be a metaphor for the human spirit. It is immortal, and only the spirit, the soul of man is immortal. Man's soul is what gives him life: witness Eliot's dry, soul-less, hollow men, —living death. Water and life are bound together in Frost's vision of the brook.

William Faulkner had a great admiration for Samuel Clemens, and his own view of the river as a symbol of freedom is similar to Clemens'. In "Old Man", a nameless convict becomes the rescuer and guardian of a pregnant woman when flood waters turn the Mississippi River into a raging force. The convict is a rescuer, but he is also a victim: a victim of society and a victim of the impersonal, natural force of the river. Organized society rejects him. When he attempts to land and return to the prison farm, he is turned away violently by the militia and forced to seek refuge again in the river, which takes him away to freedom. The river people are charitable in some cases, generous and welcoming in others. The passengers on the boat and the Cajun show more kindness than his previous experience with land-locked people would have led him to expect. Grudgingly, he takes care of the woman, assists at the birth

of her child, and protects her dispassionately until they reach a haven. He returns to the prison willingly, having discharged his duty. He believes that "a man can only do what he has to do, with what he has to do it with, with what he has learned, to the best of his judgement." The river is freedom, land is hostile society, yet he returns because it is what he "has to do." The freedom that the river offers here is rejected, but it still exists.

In "Big Two-Hearted River", Ernest Hemingway's hero, Nick Adams, turns to nature in order to revitalize himself and to forget the conflicts of civilization through a brief fishing trip in an area he had known as a young man. The story opens with a contrast between the town which had been burned and destroyed by fire, the wooded river banks, where birds, fish and insects abound and where the "sweet fern bushes" and fresh earth comfort him. Hemingway makes no profound statements. We never really see into Nick's mind, but we feel his emotion as the fishing rod comes alive when it touches the river, and when he catches his first fish. There are few references to the life-giving effects of water: a fish touched with a dry hand will develop a fungus and die, a grasshopper used as bait is spat upon for luck. The open river is seen as safe, the overgrown swampy area of the river as "tragic" and dangerous. As he washes the dead trout in the river, they seem to be "alive" again. Hemingway's hero lives in the here-and-now of concrete reality. Nick draws no conclusions, but the river seems, at the end of the story, to be doing its healing job.

Water surrounds us daily. It is a part of our bodies, it wraps itself around our continents, it falls on us from above and seeps up from below. Raging seas can destroy; still waters can restore the soul. Man's attempts to make it conform to varying philosophies may be inadequate, but one thing is sure: interpretations may change, but the "immortal force" flows on, affecting the literature and civilizations of the past, present and future. Man will always attempt to explain the inexplicable, to comprehend the incomprehensible, to control the uncontrollable, so that he may feel secure in his supremacy. Throughout all his attempts, however, the rivers rise and fall and the tides ebb and flow, as mysteriously and as secretively as ever.

ANNIE AND ME

By Bill McCullough

Today
 we walk
On winter's face.
She,
 many small steps
 in front,
Her tiny feet
 pocking
The feathery white water.
I
 keep pace—
Alone
 in grown-up thought.

(She)
 in
 Her space (I)
 in
 mine.
 My vision's scattered;
 Hers whole.
 At a distance
 I can easily make up
 (If I choose)
 I listen
 as she
 Jabbers
 of alternate dreams.
 Tomorrow,
 blinded no more
 By snow,
 I will not see her.
 Her steps will
 lengthen.
 She will move
 From my life
 Forever.

“ADAM’S CURSE”

By Gale Carmona

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Genesis 3: 17-19).

In this poem, Yeats recalls a conversation that he had with the woman he loved and her sister. He directs the poem to his love, beginning by recounting their philosophical discussion on the difficulties of writing poetry and ending by confessing (to himself) his lack of insight as a lover.

The setting of this work is that of a late summer's afternoon. The poet and the two women are sitting and watching the sun go down. They talk, and the theme of their conversation and the poem may be found in lines 21-22: "It's certain that there is no fine thing, Since Adam's fall but needs much labouring." In lines 4-20, Yeats speaks of the problem that poets confront: a poem must appear to be the result of a "moment's thought", yet it may take hours to write one line, and this writing may be more exhausting than physical labor. However, the hard-won quality of effortlessness necessary to a great poem, is unappreciated by the non-literary world which sees the poet as an "idler".

The woman friend agrees with him and repeats the theme when she says that women know intuitively "that we must labour to be beautiful."

The poet then moves from discussing intellectual and physical beauty to emotional beauty, the beauty of love. In lines 23-27, he ironically describes lovers who seek to prove their love through the traditions of courtship, patterning their emotions and actions on "precedents out of beautiful old books."

Lost in thought, the three watch the sunset and the rising of the pale moon. The poet grows contemplative, and he uses the last five lines to tell his beloved that he had tried to love her in the old, traditional way and had believed in their happiness, but that he now realizes that their love has become an empty thing, "as weary-hearted as that hollow moon."

"Adam's Curse" is an apt title for this poem, for God cursed Adam by condemning him to labor for all he desired, and labor is a recurring theme here. There are references to it in each verse: "stitching and unstitching", scrubbing, breaking stones, working, trade, the washing of the moon, striving to love. The use of feminine imagery, such as sewing, cleaning and the moon, is significant, since poetry, beauty, and love have long been thought to be of interest only to women. Sewing is compared to writing poetry, while the "weary lovers" are compared to the "hollow moon": feminine image to feminine image.

The poem is written in rhymed couplets and in continuous form: each of its stanzas, which are of unequal length, would constitute a separate paragraph if written in prose form. The long "o's" which appear in each stanza ("close," "poetry," "bones," "stones," "school," "looks," "books," "moon") help indicate the tone, one of dispassionate regret and melancholy. Perhaps the regret is not only for the present hollowness of his love, but also for the loss of Eden, of the beauty, goodness and perfection which were once freely given and are now gained only through the sacrifice of hard labor.

If we believe in the "collective unconscious" or any form of it as Yeats did, then Adam's curse affects us all. It may well account for that indefinable anxiety and sadness that we are subject to at times; the sentiment that Yeats expressed is ours as well, melancholy and regret for what we strive for and can never attain while we are "east of Eden" and burdened by Adam's curse.

THE WINDHOVER

By Gale Carmona

THE WINDHOVER

TO CHRIST OUR LORD

I caught this morning morning's minion,³ king-
dom of daylight's dauphin,⁴ dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his
riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein⁵ of a wimpling wing
in his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and
gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle!⁶ AND⁷ the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion⁸
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion

1877

—Gerard Manley Hopkins

1918

Gerard Manley Hopkins was a nineteenth century Englishman who converted to Roman Catholicism and later became a priest. The bulk of his poetry concerns the manifestation of God through nature, and his very different use of language, sound, and meter make his poetry outstanding. The tone and essence of Hopkins' poems are often felt immediately: the layers of meaning and symbolism take longer to uncover. Hopkins' poem "The Windhover" is perhaps the most complete example of his philosophy and style.

"The Windhover", dedicated "To Christ our Lord", describes the sighting of a bird, the windhover (a species of falcon), in the early morning, and the thoughts and feelings that this scene provoked in the author. Hopkins compares the bird and its characteristic flight against the wind to Christ, the Son and heir of God. The entire poem is an extended metaphor; the windhover *is* Christ. Its hovering flight against the windstream symbolizes Christ's life and teachings, which went (and continue to go) against the mainstream of human desires. Through the use of words which evoke medieval images, Hopkins reminds us of a Christ who is not just a meek, sacrificial lamb, but is the "Lamb (who) shall overcome them (the forces of evil): for he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings." (Rev. 17:14). Phrases and words such as "morning morning's [mourning's] minion" give us the image of a suffering Christ, while "kingdom of daylight's dauphin" evokes images of Christ the King, God being day and light, as evil and death are night and darkness: daylight's dauphin is God's heir. A dauphin is a prince; Christ is often referred to biblically as the "Prince of Peace." The royal imagery continues: valour, plume, chevalier, gold-vermilion.

The choice of the windhover, a member of the falcon family, to represent Christ is purposeful and masterly. Falcons have especially regal and chivalric connotations, since they were used in medieval times only by the nobility. A falcon is a proud, independent bird, a king among birds, far different from the dove of peace which is a traditional symbol for the spirit of God.

The poem is written in the form of a Petrarchan sonnet. The octave serves to give the reader visual images of the bird's flight. In lines 3-5, there is an equestrian comparison: the bird is "riding . . . and striding . . . upon the rein . . ." Lines 6 and 7 compare the flight to the sweeping smoothness of a skater as he "hurls and glides" on the ice against the wind. The author's emotional reaction, his "heart in hiding", is perhaps a reference to his priestly state, where his heart is "hidden from earthly things in the service of God" (The Norton Anthology of English Literature).

The first three lines of the sestet list the qualities seen in the bird/Christ: beauty, valour, pride, all "buckle" (join) in a way that is "dangerous" for us to accept, for Christ is to be our model for humility and patience. The last three lines of the poem, however, remind us that many things include their opposites. The pressure of the plowhorse's hooves can make the earth shine between the plowed furrows, and dull, "blue-bleak embers" contain "gold-vermilion" fire. "Gall" and "gash gold-vermilion" in the last line may refer to the crucifixion of Christ, where he was given vinegar and gall to drink while on the cross, and his side was pierced [gashed] and blood [vermilion] flowed. Gold again is a reminder of richness, of royalty, of kingship.

Hopkins makes great use of musical devices in his works. In "The Windhover" the first two lines are almost entirely alliterative: "Morning morning's minion", "daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn drawn" focus our attention on the subject of the poem. "Wimpling wing", "sweeps smooth," "bowbend", "heart in hiding," and other alliterations continue throughout the work. He often combines two or more devices, for example, in "dawn drawn Falcon", consonance, alliteration and internal rhyme are employed. "Stirred . . . bird" shows both assonance and consonance, while "times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my Chevalier" includes initial alliteration and stress on the long "o" sounds in many of the words, bring a sense of the gravity (danger) of the thought. The musical devices give a certain rhythm to the octave, aiding in the flow of words, building up a sense of expectation and ecstasy in the reader. The sestet is considerably more measured in pace: the long "o" sounds and the plosives in "brute beauty", "pride, plume" are harsher sounds. "No wonder, sheer plod makes plough-down sillion shine" slows the rhythm down even more drastically, and sets the pace for the final lines. It is almost impossible to speak these lines clearly and swiftly because of their initial and final consonant sounds.

Hopkins called the rhythm of his poetry "sprung rhythm", which designates the "meter of poetry whose rhythm is based on the number of stressed syllables in a line without regard to the number of unstressed syllables . . . The obvious result of a line composed of combinations of such varying feet is extreme metrical irregularity." (*Handbook to English Literature*, Thrall, Hibbard and Hubbard.) The predominate foot in "The Windhover" seems to be the dactyl, but this is by no means uniform throughout. The poem is highly rhythmical, but extremely difficult to scan by the classical method. The rhyme scheme is also a variation of the classical Petrarchan form: the octave is arranged aaaaaaaa, but masculine and feminine rhyme are used in an abba, abba mode. The sestet follows the usual cdcdcd form. The lines are run-on throughout the poem, with end-rhyme appearing only at the end of the octave and at the third and sixth lines of the sestet.

Hopkins, by his innovative use of rhythm and musical devices, gives the reader the essence of the windhover and of his own conception of Christ. The very dramatic rhythm of the lines, whose rise and fall parallel the swooping and gliding of the bird, builds up an almost uncontainable tension in the reader. Hopkins attempts to verbalize the non-verbal, to transfer to the reader his sense of excitement, of awe, of worship. When one hears the poem, an emotional surge is experienced, and the reader shares with Hopkins his responses to the bird. Through sound and sense, we, with Hopkins, feel the dignity and majesty of the windhover and consequently, that of Christ, to whom this sonnet is dedicated.

PAIN FOR A DAUGHTER

By Bill McCullough

Anne Sexton's poem "Pain For a Daughter" is primarily concerned with connections and the knowledge of connections between mother, daughter, and all women. Writing in free verse, Sexton uses the frankness of ordinary speech to convey the poem's secondary purpose, the daughter's evolution from innocence to understanding. For Sexton, images are the heart of all poetry. Believing that images come from the unconscious, she dredges up extremely sensual visions to incorporate into the heart of this poem. We are privileged to experience the high drama of the event that brings mother and daughter together through the use of Sexton's graphic physical descriptions.

By use of continuous form Sexton is able to convey the daughter's emotional growth through crisis. The lines break only to imply a progressive coming of age. The only deviation occurs in the second and third stanzas. Here Sexton uses nine lines in each stanza as a divergence to focus on the concreteness of loss and pain, as opposed to the more abstract emotions of love and fear, which are represented in the first and fourth stanzas.

The beginning line of each stanza shows the daughter in the throes of these powerful primal emotions. In these extremes she visualizes nothing in the phenomenal world, but instead captures an instant of its essence. In these instants she becomes one with all women. She is "Blind" to all but an awareness of the moment, this moment, any moment. In this condition she moves from "Love" to "Loss" of innocence; she moves from "pain" and "fear" to a knowledge of life.

The vivid imagery begins in the first stanza as the daughter cries for "those long-necked marchers and churners." This churning of sexual agitation, symbolized by the horses, continues in the second stanza as Sexton show us "... flaming ... swan-whipped thoroughbreds." Also in the second stanza the daughter, in her sexual ripeness, "... tugs at and cajoles," which leads to her accident and her figurative loss of innocence. In the third and fourth stanzas Sexton's imagery intensifies as she graphically details the daughter's injury. Sexton depends heavily on imagery not only to express the literal tribulations of the two women, but also to maintain a consistent tone of sensuality and revelation.

While Sexton's tone is expressed mainly by her use of imagery, her diction throbs with life and serves the tone well also. Verbs such as "ripped", "bites", "cries" and "blossom" move us to feel the physical revelations. Other words that engage us in this struggle are "stretch out" and "torn". These words symbolize the internal as well as the external forces that are pulling the daughter apart. The use of "Blind" at the beginning of each stanza portrays the power of each emotion. Sexton uses figures of speech and musical devices sparingly; however, with line repetition she skillfully incorporates sound with sense. Toward the end of the poem the mother realizes, "Where a child would have cried Mama, /Where a child would have believed Mama"; this repetition of sound reinforces the sense of her knowledge. Still later, Sexton uses word repetition as she repeats, "I saw her" three times. Finally, to solidify their communion, Sexton writes, "I knew that she knew."

The poem is narrated by a woman who is trying to reconnect herself with her daughter. The connections and resemblances she seeks become valuable only when they form a spiritual unit. This connection does not happen until the end of the poem when the mother, who has been unable to become physically involved with her daughter ("I stand at the door, eyes locked on the ceiling, eyes of a stranger ..."), connects intuitively, "... I saw her ... in her own death, and I knew that she knew." She knows her daughter is no longer a child, "Where a child would have cried Mama"; she is a woman who calls on God. She is, in effect, calling on the Jungian collective unconscious, where all women meet at the still point, yet are paradoxically alone in themselves. They are a clear channel of trust, illustrated by each other's understanding of what it means to be a woman. The mother sees and accepts herself reflected in her daughter's pain, thus allowing direct connection, only now without distortion of rhetoric or attribution.

Anne Sexton has written a sensitive, painful but most of all, beautiful poem of universal proportions. She has crafted more than a poem. Through deep insight into her own unconscious, she has touched the pulse of every woman's labor to be.

LOVE LOST

By Bill McCullough

Both T.S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and Henry James' novel *The Beast in the Jungle* refer to questions, questions never asked and questions answered too late. This failure in the make-up of each writer's protagonist condemns him to a wasted life. Prufrock and James' main character, John Marcher, are both, to use Eliot's phrase, "hollow men". In the context of their fictional surroundings they show varying degrees of emptiness, and emptiness they reflect through their respective author's personal literary philosophy. For Eliot, the poet should have no personality to impose upon his characters; he should be a medium through which his story is to be told. James' conviction is that persons are "tabula rasa" each a blank tablet upon which experiences are to be written. The eventual outcome of each character's odyssey is determined by his inability to cope with objective experiences.

Eliot's opening line invites Prufrock's divided self to venture through his metaphorical sexual frustrations to a place where "The women come and go". His purpose in daring this adventure is to make a final attempt to integrate his mind, which is in conflict, but is presumably concerned with love. His adventurous "I" initially takes control of his suppressed "you" as he sets out to ask "the question". Although he is afraid that he does not have the ability to change his life and he knows he cannot bear the reality of human relationships, Prufrock's alternative is a continuing life of empty dreams. He will tackle the problem of change, and through Eliot, he will sink or swim.

John Marcher, on the other hand, begins at a stand still and proceeds through his life by running in place. His friend, May Bartram, tries subtly to coax him into mobility by posing as his resourceful self. But Marcher is not divided, nor is he to be divided. He is an empty page that not even someone as close as May Bartram can write on. The terrible thing that is to happen to him is, in effect, happening to him all the time. Nothing. Nothing ever happens to Marcher at any moment in his life. He knows nothing of either relationships or dreams. He has already drowned before he ever thought to swim.

Eliot believes that "genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood." To this extent you can communicate with Prufrock before you fully understand his motives. His plight is universal. Through Eliot you live this poem and identify with Prufrock's plight. His every emotion stirs a familiar response in your own mind. Yet you do not interpret Prufrock; interpretation means translating into other terms. For Eliot, "what you get out of a poem must be found in it." In this poem the sentiments are those of Prufrock. Eliot's aim is to communicate Prufrock as the actor, one who acts, one who wills change within himself, and one who realizes his inability to be a part of the objective world. He knows he is pathetic and absurd. His acceptance dignifies him. Thus he is no figure of fun, as is John Marcher.

Henry James is a realist. His function is not to show life as it should be lived, but how it is lived. His art conveys an "air of reality". James introduces his novels as "Living things, like any other organism, with something of each in each of the other parts." Through the pathos of John Marcher, however, James shows you more than a touch of determinism. Marcher's actions, such as they are, are not free; they are determined by external forces. In contrast to Prufrock, Marcher knows nothing of life. He cannot summon up the gumption to change his life because he does not feel there is anything that needs to be changed. He is an observer, not an actor. He waits in vain for his fate to be determined by a tremendous future event, which of course, never comes. Marcher's life is inane. Because nothing has ever been written on his "tabula rasa", he knows nothing of himself; he knows nothing of the world. His life is a horror story.

The theme of love dominates Eliot's poem. Prufrock is making his last attempt at love. He has just enough courage left to gather his minimal resources and ask the question. Whether his question is meant to show love for an individual or for the world is immaterial. His aim at inner change is the important factor. He fails. He is afraid. Failure and fear are both very human emotions. Prufrock is "not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be." He knows who he is and adopts this knowledge. He will never sing his love song, though he knows the words. The "sea-girls" will not sing to him, but he is beyond temptation. His perceptions of his life and of life in general are clear. He has struggled with the world. He has loved and lost.

Love is also the motif in *The Beast in the Jungle*. May Bartram exudes love, but Marcher is so wrapped up in his own imaginary future he cannot see her love in the present. Through the years of patient "watching" May offers her affections many times, in many ways. Marcher, by involving her in his empty vision, forces her to live, with him, a dry life of pretense. They only play at reality. ("We've had together great imaginations.") Marcher is not afraid of failure because he never tries to do anything. His life is in perfect order. He is waiting for outside forces to lend credence to his life. He is a blind man stumbling through his own little barren world. He has never loved at all.

Each of these characters, through their responses to the objective world, are failures. For Prufrock the question of love is lived subjectively, but it is never vocalized to the outside world. In Marcher's case we see the question answered to late. The personification of objectivity, May Bartram, is gone before she is able to penetrate his fortress of nothingness. Change is not possible for Prufrock; change is not even contemplated by Marcher. Prufrock is a man with whom you can identify, a man overly concerned with himself to be sure, but one who shares with you not only his fears but his ambitions. He is a man you could talk to over a cup of coffee. Marcher is self-consumed also but is unaware of it; he is unaware of anything. If you had coffee with him, he would only talk of himself; he would talk of nothing. You would probably be uncomfortable. You would want to write something on his blank tablet. He would draw you close and insist that he doesn't have one . . . yet.

Purdue University North Central
Hwy. 421 & Indiana Toll Road
Westville, Indiana 46391